

May 2014 subject reports

Portuguese A Language and Literature

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 27	28 - 43	44 - 57	58 - 71	72 - 85	86 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 29	30 - 42	43 - 57	58 - 70	71 - 84	85 - 100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The oral exam should last 15 minutes. However, some were longer than this because teachers had asked more questions than was necessary. Others lasted less than 10 minutes even with the teacher's questions, which is not appropriate either. Teachers should pay attention to the questions used in the discussion because it is not necessary to ask students to repeat topics that were already

well commented before. According to the subject guide, the candidate speaks for 10 minutes and the discussion and subsequent questions should last 5 minutes (page 61).

Some teachers' questions led to short and direct answers in the discussion time when candidates did not speak for the whole ten minutes. Even though the intention of these teachers was good, this practice shows more the teacher's analysis than the student's ability to appreciate a literary passage.

There was a good choice of passages overall, but some narrative extracts were so long that candidates could not comment well on them. In these cases, students opted to do just an interpretation of the theme and plot or they chose to discuss just a few aspects of the whole text presented.

During the commentary candidates must focus on the text only. If the text is an extract from a novel, for example, the relationship to the whole text or other works by the writer should be mentioned only when relevant. Students' comments on the author's lives and works, with no relevant relationship with the passages, before the analysis itself are not suitable. Some individual orals included 3 or 4 minutes on this as an introduction learnt by heart.

The oral work of some schools was interrupted by noise coming from cell phones, school's telephones or break time bells, even whispers, which were loud and candidates were disrupted by them. These practices can distract candidates and affect their performance.

Passages should be presented to candidates with clear and organized lines marked with numbers on the margins to guide students' commentaries.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Knowledge and understanding of the text or extract. In the assessment for this criterion, teachers should take in account that the commentary should be supported by good references from the text.

It is reminded that examiners do not have previous knowledge of the candidates and that marks should be based on the performance in the Individual Oral Commentary only. Generally, there were very few teachers who were happy with the students' analysis and some teachers' expectations seemed too high, although the level descriptors are clear about the requirements to achieve excellent, very good, adequate or superficial.

Criterion B: Understanding of the use and effects of literary features – The majority of guiding questions for the candidates were very good which led to very good answers. However, there were a few guiding questions about the passages which were too vague or so similar to each other that they seemed to be asking the same and candidates had difficulties to answer these.

Teachers should pay attention to the guide's descriptions for criterion B, regarding literary features, and not only to the knowledge of the extract. This is important because good marks are achieved by candidates that are aware of literary features, with very good understanding of their effects.

It is not expected a line by line commentary nor students reading from the passage too much.

Criterion C: Organization – the two focuses here are the organization of the candidate's commentary and the coherence of its structure.

Certain candidates repeated some topics many times and so they couldn't achieve better marks.

Criterion D: Language – The majority of the candidates showed a clear and accurate use of Portuguese, but some could not receive higher marks because the variety of vocabulary or the use of good terminology for a literary commentary were poorer. The style of presentation was a factor that made a substantial difference when examiners listened to these commentaries.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should pay attention to:

- prepare candidates to analyze the relationship between formal elements and their meaning in a passage
- complete the candidate details correctly in the forms and passages
- number the lines of the poem or narrative on the margins of the extracts
- present a passage that is not too long nor too short for the oral commentary
- ensure that a quiet room is used for the exam's recording
- intervene less frequently than the candidate in the discussion time
- avoid repeating a question to candidates during the discussion time, precisely what the candidate has already commented well in the first part of the exam
- ensure that questions relate to works on Part 4.

Higher level written task

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 11	12 - 18	19 - 23	24 - 28	29 - 33	34 - 40

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There were some good and interesting texts which showed a very good understanding of the chosen topics and skills of textual analysis, to conduct inquiry, independence in learning and engagement with language and culture.

Examiners were pleased to notice that some schools had observed the recommendations on the report from May 13. However, there are still some areas for improvement:

Some schools are presenting incorrect list of works for their programmes. In the candidate form, the candidate list should be according to what he/she has studied in the course. This is not a simple problem of errors in the completion of the form, sometimes the work submitted is not in the candidate's programme.

It is reminded that one of the Written Tasks at Higher Level needs to be based on a literary text from the candidate's programme.

Some candidates presented very similar tasks (same topic, same type of text and same focus of analysis). This was observed both in WT1 and WT2. Others presented topics that are not related to Portuguese language and cultures, for example: Audrey Hepburn, Roger Federer, Michael Jordan or even the Syrian war, which are not suitability topics. If candidates present their work on a biography, event, culture, conflict, etc. this should be related to the Portuguese's world, or it should have some links with it; following the requirements from the subject guide regarding "engagement with language and culture". Furthermore, the bibliography should be presented (containing correct and complete references in their tasks) at the end of that specific task.

A few candidates did not present an Outline at all for Written Task 2.

Regarding the number of words, examiners noticed some works which exceeded the word limit and, on the other hand, some very superficial works with just (or even under) the minimum number of words. In some cases, the number of words in the tasks did not correspond to what was written in the form. These practices can disadvantage candidates' performance.

Even though students should be encouraged to be creative, they should be careful that the work is not completely different and unrelated to the original as regards the context of the work or the style of the writer.

Regarding Criterion D, there were some Written Tasks which were very weak in Portuguese language and even difficult to understand.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Written Task 1

Criterion A: Rationale – The rationale is a justification of the work and should be done according to the guide's requirements. It should contain a clear explanation of the topics requested in the guide. Some candidates had difficulties with the writing of the rationale for WT1 and the outline for WT2. Some rationales, incorrectly, were a summary of the candidate task, and did not indicate the required information. Regarding WT2, some outlines were not really a plan of the candidate task. Outlines should also be completed according to the guide's requirements as they are not just a summary of the candidate's WT2. Candidates should pay more attention to the audience of their tasks.

Criterion B: Task and content – Superficial understanding of the topic or text were observed in those candidates who opted for a summary or did not present the conventions of the text type chosen, for example, when they decided to write a biography or a diary but the outcomes did not resemble these text types.

Criterion C: Organization – ideas that run freely commenting a literary work were observed as well as too much repetition of some aspects. Also, some did not present what they had said they were intending to do in the rationale.

Criterion D: Language and style – Some of the main concerns in this regard are: simple and repeated vocabulary, “regencia nominal e verbal”, cohesion in sentences and paragraphs, incorrect use of verbal tenses and auxiliary verbs or syntax errors. Regarding the style, some candidates used an inappropriate register.

Written Task 2

Criterion A: Outline – The outline is a plan and not a justification of the work. It is the scheme of the candidate’s text to discuss the chosen question. The guide explains clearly what should be included in the outline.

Criterion B: Response to the question – It is reminded that this task should be done in the form of a formal essay.

Criterion C: Organization and argument – Many candidates presented and organized their work coherently, but they did not follow an appropriate argument in a consistent way. Structure is considered to be “coherent” if the task is logically organized and cohesive.

Criterion D: Language and style – Most candidates performed well on their use of language, but some did not follow an appropriate register. Formal language and style are important here. Use of slang and/or inappropriate words were present in some tasks; this is not appropriate in an official exam context. The most frequent mistakes were related to sentence structure and syntax.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should be aware of the guidelines for each of the tasks and help candidates choose a focused and appropriate composition which must be related to a part of the course. Some schools present similar works what seems an answer to a homework or reproduction of a class’s presentation in a lesson. The content of the tasks or choice of one question should be decided by the candidate as well as all the sources that have been used to support their work.

Teachers should exercise more the difference between the rationale and the outline, and ask candidates to reread the criteria before submitting their tasks to see if what they did was really expressed there.

Teachers should advice about the danger of going too far in terms of creativity, not only in the context of the work but also on the style of the writer or the proposed task, because frequently tasks had no links to the text studied.

At Higher Level, one task submitted must be on part 1 or part 2 and one task submitted must be on part 3 or part 4 of the course.

Standard level written task

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There were some good and interesting texts which showed a very good understanding of the chosen topics as well as skills for textual analysis, to conduct inquiry, independence in learning and engagement with language and culture.

Examiners were pleased to notice that some schools had observed our recommendations on the report from May 13. However, there are still some areas for improvement:

A complete bibliography containing correct references should be presented at the end of the written task.

Schools should ensure that they are following the correct requirements for the course, as some lists of works did not comply with these requirements. A variety of genres should be selected. There were a few schools which had, for instance, only narrative works in their lists.

If candidates presents their work on a biography, event, culture, conflict, etc. this should be related to cultures where Portuguese is spoken or have an appropriate link with it.

Regarding the number of words, examiners noticed some works which exceeded the word limit and also very superficial works with just (or even under) the minimum number of words.

The written task submitted for external assessment must be the student's own work. However, the teacher should discuss the task with the candidates and ensure that they are familiar with the requirements of the task and the assessment criteria.

Even though students should be encouraged to be creative, they should be careful that the work is not completely different and unrelated to the original, as regards the context of the work or the style of the writer. A written task demonstrates the student's ability to choose an imaginative way of exploring an aspect of the material studied in the course, but it is very important that the task shows a critical engagement with an aspect of the text or topic. Good references from the material studied are required and these should be appropriately detailed in the bibliography.

It is important to remember that a formal essay is not an acceptable text type.

Some candidates presented very similar tasks (same topic, same type of text and even same focus of analysis).

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Rationale – The rationale is a justification of the work and should be done according to the guide’s requirements. It should contain a clear explanation and understanding of the aspect being investigated. Some candidates had difficulties writing the rationale: they only presented a summary of the task but did not indicate the required information.

Criterion B: Task and content – This criterion takes into consideration three aspects: the understanding of the text or topic, the appropriateness of the task chosen and the understanding of the conventions of the text type chosen. Many candidates performed well here. The exceptions noticed related to superficial understanding, weak arguments, very few references or incorrect use of the conventions of the text type chosen; for example: a letter or a diary with no date, farewell... , a proposal for a task that is not fulfilled or repetition of the same idea throughout the task.

Criterion C: Organization – This criterion takes into consideration two aspects: the organization of the task and the coherence of the structure. It was a difficult criterion for some candidates in this session. Some very confusing structures were presented.

Criterion D: Language and style – This criterion takes into consideration two aspects: the use of the Portuguese language and the register. Register refers, in this context, to the student’s use of elements such as vocabulary, tone, sentence structure and idioms that are appropriate to the task chosen. However, care should be taken and appropriate language should be used even if trying to imitate a particular character’s style.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Once candidates have decided on their area of study and their particular title, they are free to produce any text type that is appropriate to task, except an essay.

Candidates must acknowledge all sources used. Where appropriate – for example, when the task relies on the reader referring to stimulus material such a key passage in a literary text, or an illustration – the source must be clearly referenced in the bibliography.

All texts studied (literary, media or other) must be in the target language of the course (with the exception of some works from the PLT which may be studied in another language) and the written tasks must always be written in Portuguese.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20

The range and suitability of the work submitted

It is recommended to practice more the comparative textual analysis, instructing students to also comment on the context, audience and purpose of the texts. They knew they had to comment on the similarities and differences, but they should enrich the exam with the context, audience and purpose.

Students should be advised to write neatly and to be careful with the use of too many asterisks or crossed out words in their commentaries.

The majority of candidates opted for the second pair of analysis on the theme of water in two non-literary texts, instead of the women theme that had a poem and a criticism of an advertisement.

Most of those who chose the poem “Voz da Encruzilhada” and the Dove article had a good performance even though some candidates included some inaccurate comments. The great majority demonstrated very good understanding and appreciation of the texts, commenting well on the form and content with well-developed levels of expression and appreciation of literary style.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates and the areas in which candidates appeared well prepared

Criterion A: Understanding and comparison of the texts

Candidates were good at showing the similarities and differences between the texts, pointing them on theme, text types and their contexts. They knew they had to support their comments by references of the texts.

However not so many commented well on the purpose and audience. Regarding text C, for instance, some commented on the advertisement form but did not say it was an invitation to an event. Others said the event would be to people older than 13, which did not correspond to the content of the text.

Criterion B: Understanding of the use and effects of stylistic features

Candidates had a good performance on the first part of this criterion, but the same cannot be said about the effects of stylistic features on the reader (again there was a lack of understanding of the impact on the audience). Commenting on the visual elements of the text was easier for them, but not analyzing the effects on the reader.

Criterion C: Organization and development

This seems to be a challenging area for candidates. It seemed that they tried to develop their comparative analysis commenting similar topics by paragraphs. However, many had presented repeated topics or confused appreciations of some aspects and the structure of their analysis came to be disorganized.

Criterion D: Language

The register, style and terminology seemed to be easy for most candidates; they were confident and secure of their understanding of the texts.

In some cases, the use of informal language and the lack of a good range of terminology led the analysis to include just simple writing.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Examiners noticed that many candidates had tried to analyze non-literary texts as literary ones, for example overusing or misusing some literary terminology.

It is recommended to practice with more exercises related to the audience, the structure of the response (introductions and conclusions) and the effects of the visual aids.

Students should avoid using terms in languages other than Portuguese.

There were some very short analyses that did not comment on many aspects of the texts, preventing these candidates from achieving higher marks.

Draft papers can be used during the production stage, but the final work presented should be neat.

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 20

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

No specific areas of the programme and examination were particularly difficult to the candidates. Overall there was a good level of responses. General difficulties were mainly concentrated on the use of language and register, some presenting limited structures, vocabulary repetition and verbs inconsistencies. Register varied from appropriate to some poorer examples. Aspects from the texts that were more difficult to the candidates were linked to the identification of audiences and a more in-depth understanding of the significance of literary features as a mean to produce an effect on the audience.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Most of the candidates presented commentaries of original and diverse textual analysis with critical understanding of wider contexts. Some candidates presented interesting commentaries that showed a very good understanding of the chosen text and broad structures; few were limited to a superficial analysis that concentrated mainly on listing formal structures. A broad range of features from the texts were positively used by candidates, such as well-chosen references/examples and identification of

text mood and purpose, references about text types and structure, including some comments about the visual effects. There was a good and varied range of commentaries about how some text aspects were used to create particular effects. Responses in general were organised and coherent.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Overall candidates enthusiastically engaged with questions and creatively responded to the task, few presenting a deviation from the initial answer proposed either in word numbers and/or analysis. Overall a good knowledge and understanding of the questions was shown, including commentaries that attempted to express the analysis on the light of their understanding of possible audiences and purposes.

Commentaries' introductions can be a challenge for some candidates varying from over-elaborated statements to a lack of introduction to the commentary.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

The use of vocabulary can be limited and repetitive and this needs to be reviewed. Spelling mistakes is a recurring issue for many candidates over many years and needs to be addressed. Grammar structures and verb and noun agreements need to be addressed in more depth. Students would benefit from practising this type of exercise, bearing in mind the word count. The formal visual aspects of texts in general could be further explored as a mean to complement further analysis.

Higher level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 22	23 - 25

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Many candidates showed a good 'knowledge and understanding' of the works but they have difficulties to narrow their analysis to the question asked, spending a long time writing a summary of the book and not a focused answer.

Candidates find it difficult to address Criterion C - "Understanding of the use and effects of stylistic features" and to make it part of their answer. The main stylistic features mentioned referred to characterisation, narration, point of view and the title of the works studied. There were less pertinent references to setting, description and linguistic and rhetorical features. However, many candidates did not even mention any features directly.

Developing the argument was not an easy task for some candidates and sometimes their essays were just a presentation of ideas, divided in paragraphs, which did not lead to a developed argument. The appropriate terminology was not always used by some candidates and they often lacked accuracy in terms of language.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The understanding of the historical, political and social context of the works was generally well presented and most candidates achieved very good marks on Criterion A.

In order of preference, the most popular questions were 3, 5, and 4. Candidates showed a good understanding of the implications of these questions. However, answers to question 2, more focused in literary features, were fewer in quantity but generally quite effective.

Most candidates were able to organise and structure their answers effectively. The use of language was generally clear and the choice of register appropriate. Some candidates displayed a very mature style.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

In question 3, the most popular choice, many pupils clearly stated the opinions of the authors but they could not analyse the implications of those opinions in the works studied or were unable to identify moments where those opinions could be verified. In question 5, candidates could identify the social environment of the action, but sometimes missed to analyse the influence of that environment on the characters' actions. Question 4 provided different readings of the works with answers varying from the analysis of the power of love, political power, social power, economical power, etc.

Very few candidates chose the other three questions.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should orientate candidates in order to help them explore more extensively the references to literary features within the works. Some quite good responses could not achieve higher marks because they did not show evidence of these references. They should study the works exploring not only the historical, political and social context, but also developing the understanding of the philosophic or ideological background of the works; this would help candidates understand the value of the work in a local and worldwide dimension.

Candidates should also be aware that their personal interpretation of the works is as important, or even more important, than the opinions they have read or heard.

As regards language, prepositions are frequently used wrongly and there were some candidates with quite limited vocabulary, repeating the same expressions too often.

Standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 21	22 - 25

General comments

Candidates mostly preferred to answer to questions related to the cultural and historical context of literary works. Therefore, the most selected questions were 3, 5 and 4, by order of preference. Questions 1 and 6, referring to narrative construction were also chosen but very few candidates answered to question 2, which referred to stylistic aspects.

The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

The most difficult area for the candidates continues to be the reference to the authors' stylistic choices in relation to the question. In most cases, candidates mentioned some aspects concerning characterisation, narrative structure and some quotes considering the language used. However, the presented examples rarely revealed a personalised and singular analysis of these details as a way of showing an insightful understanding of their use in relation with the content and context of the books studied.

Language accuracy in terms of spelling, word accentuation and use of specific terminology is an area to be improved.

The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

Candidates have shown satisfactory knowledge of the main facts related to authors' political and philosophical background. In general, the knowledge of the content of the books was substantially demonstrated, including appropriate examples. There is a tendency to focus more in main characters and, in some cases, a reference to secondary characters or secondary conflicts could also be appropriate to provide a complete illustration of the main point of the essay. Students were particularly well prepared to analyse the social background of characters and how this influenced the main conflicts.

The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

Criterion A: Students have shown a substantial knowledge of the books' content and their social, historical and political context. However references to these contextual aspects were generally too concise.

Criterion B: Although there was a fair understanding of the main expectations of the question, the examples chosen to illustrate their understanding tended to be very similar amongst several candidates.

Criterion C: Characterisation was the most commonly referred aspect, followed by the narrative structure. In general, there was little reference to setting and its relation with characters. There is also a general lack of analysis of meaningful rhetorical features.

Criterion D: Answers were satisfactorily structured and have shown clear and balanced exploration of both works. However, it was not very common to find answers that showed arguments which are structured and developed in view of a detailed, logical and personal approach of all the expectations of the question.

Criterion E: Language was mostly clear and appropriate, although spelling and accentuation mistakes were frequent.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Practise the structure of personalised essays with arguments that provide a personal and well illustrated answer to the question;
- Focus on how stylistic devices help the author to convey a message;
- Focus on written language accuracy.